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*Helping People Help the Land*



**JULY 2012**

# Activity **report**



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## Programs

The past two months have been very busy from the 2008 Farm Bill program perspective. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program budget was augmented by \$7.4M with a recent allocation received on July 17th. The following tables show where Texas NRCS and our partners have obligated Farm Bill money in FY 12 to date.

PROGRAM	TOTAL Financial Assistance
<b>EQIP 2008</b>	<b>\$70,977,804</b>
<b>WHIP 2008</b>	<b>\$159,989</b>
<b>CSP 2008</b>	<b>\$7,431,540</b>
<b>AWEP 2008</b>	<b>\$6,573,876</b>
<b>FRPP</b>	<b>\$5,500,000</b>
<b>GRP</b>	<b>\$14,191,511</b>
<b>WRP</b>	<b>\$17,381,140</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$122,215,859</b>



# Programs (cont'd)

This is a breakdown of the number of contracts, funding and acres covered under the EQIP Statewide Resource Concerns.

EQIP/ SWRC	Contracts Obligated	Obligation Amount	Contracted Acres
Beef 12	2	\$47,543	135
Black-capped Vireo Rangeland 12	1	\$23,790	101
Dairy 12	13	\$538,362	2,037
Eagle Mt Lake Spec Proj 12	38	\$160,617	5,365
Edwards Aquifer T&E Cropland Irrigation 12	17	\$682,084	1,717
Edwards Aquifer T&E Rangeland 12	8	\$244,698	2,768
Fever Tick Rangeland 12	8	\$827,018	19,219
Gulf Coast Cropland Irrigation 12	4	\$288,343	746
Lower Rio Grande Valley Cropland Irrigation 12	4	\$73,121	385
North and South Llano Rangeland 12	5	\$488,204	4,464
North Concho River Rangeland 12	4	\$129,782	6,492
Pedernales River Rangeland 12	4	\$133,201	2,033
Plant Health - Rangeland Erosion 12	1	\$111,621	12,765
Poultry 12	93	\$3,255,355	5,565
Pronghorn Antelope Rangeland 12	3	\$54,971	9,278
Rolling Plains Quail Rangeland 12	10	\$72,990	1,933
Seymour Aquifer Cropland Irrigation 12	26	\$711,321	3,153
South Central Texas Rangeland 12	56	\$472,045	17,943
Spring/DoveCreek/TwinButtes Rangeland 12	29	\$1,220,949	48,513
TX Beginning Farmer Rancher 12	101	\$3,174,805	48,276
TX Seasonal High Tunnels 12	14	\$85,740	388
TX Socially Disadvantaged 12	161	\$3,178,448	63,144
West TX Cropland Irrigation 12	48	\$2,709,934	5,743
<b>Total EQ12 SWRC</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>\$18,684,942</b>	<b>262,165</b>

This is the funding we placed into the Resource Team base funding that was made available to local offices according to their priority and corresponding totals.

<b>EQIP Resource Team Concerns</b>	<b>Contracts Obligated</b>	<b>Obligation Amount</b>	<b>Contracted Acres</b>
Cropland	289	\$4,048,431	45,996
Irrigated Cropland	203	\$4,917,736	43,179
Non-Industrial Private Forest Land	230	\$3,370,953	18,291
Ogallala Aquifer	136	\$2,088,228	66,394
Pasture	884	\$7,050,753	126,654
Rangeland	1,108	\$17,468,734	1,022,689
<b>Total RTL - CONCERNS</b>	<b>2,850</b>	<b>\$38,944,836</b>	<b>1,323,203</b>

We have two active Agricultural Water Enhancement Program projects – the Ogallala Aquifer, and Leon River projects. Funding allocations, obligations and acres under contract are listed below.

**AWEP 2008 FUND CODE**

TAWC Enhancement Prog-Ogallala Cropland	240	\$6,459,614	64,133
Water Quality - Leon River Rangeland	7	\$114,262	2,084
<b>Total AWEP 2008</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>\$6,573,876</b>	<b>66,217</b>

Here's the EQIP summary for the fiscal year so far. These numbers were accurate as of July 23rd, and we have exhausted our program allocation.

	<b>Contracts Obligated</b>	<b>Obligation Amount</b>	<b>Contracted Acres</b>
<b>SWRC</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>\$18,684,942</b>	<b>262,165</b>
<b>RTL - CONCERNS</b>	<b>2,850</b>	<b>\$38,944,836</b>	<b>1,323,203</b>
<b>NHQ INITIATIVES</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>\$13,348,026</b>	<b>456,806</b>
<b>TOTAL EQ12 OBLIGATION</b>	<b>3,906</b>	<b>\$70,977,804</b>	<b>2,042,173</b>
<b>TOTAL AWEP</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>\$6,573,876</b>	<b>66,217</b>

We had a good year from the easement side of the Farm Bill as well. We obligated all initially allocated funding and received additional funding from NHQ to supplement the backlog of program demand.

### Protecting the Pecos: Landowners and Agencies Partner to Protect the Pecos River

*Story by Jaime Tankersley*

The Pecos River is an iconic symbol in West Texas. Many consider it an oasis in the water stricken, semi-arid desert country of the state. It has served as a source of major historical, biological and hydrological importance to the entire Pecos River Basin and the Rio Grande. The Pecos River provides approximately 9.5 percent of the annual inflows to the International Amistad Reservoir, a major source of drinking and irrigation water for the lower Rio Grande Valley and its millions of residents. However, the river also contributes an estimated 26 percent of salt loading to the reservoir annually, periodically causing salinity levels to approach the maximum drinking water standard.

With time and the worst drought in 50 years still holding a death grip on the area, the once ample historic source of water is dwindling down to a trickle in some areas. Its salinity is so high that its use for irrigation and livestock watering has become limited in many instances.

Knowing a change was needed, conservation-oriented agencies stepped up to the plate. Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB), USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Crockett and Upper Pecos Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Texas Water Resources Institute, Texas Clean Rivers Program, Texas Forest Service (TFS) and local landowners set forth to improve and conserve the present natural resources.

Utilizing partnership efforts, SWCD field technicians have been working directly with watershed landowners to promote, develop and implement Water Quality Management Plans (WQMP) through the TSSWCB. Starting on properties adjoining or near the Pecos River and now including

properties along major tributaries, producers are being offered financial incentives and technical guidance to implement conservation practices and management plans that can improve the overall condition of the Pecos River.

During recent Pecos River Watershed Spring Field Days, producers gained insight into the ways NRCS, Farm Service Agency, and SWCD programs can be combined to help them combat the water quality along the river. Working with the varied programs allows producers to obtain both technical and financial assistance. Producers also learned about the options available to them through the Pecos River Watershed Protection Plan, including:

- the SWCD Water Quality Management Plan program, which offers technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers,
- saltcedar leaf beetles, and
- prescribed burning of dead saltcedar along the Pecos River.

Plans for the future include establishing additional saltcedar leaf beetle colonies, conducting prescribed burning of the dead saltcedar along the Pecos River, and expanding the Water Quality Management Program to include producers along the Pecos River and the major tributaries of the Pecos River.



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